

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

August 1, 2007

1:30 p.m., MST

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met in Amphitheater Board Room, 701 W. Wetmore Road, Tucson, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. MST.

1. Call to Order

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman

Dr. John Baracy

Dr. Eugene Garcia

Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan

Ms. Johanna Haver

Ms. Eileen Klein

Ms. Anna Rosas

Absent:

Mr. Jim DiCello

Ms. Karen Merritt

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

2. Presentation and Discussion of DRAFT Structured English Immersion Models based on the June 15, 2007 version.

Chairman Maguire thanked the Amphitheater District Board members and Superintendent Balentine for hosting the Tucson public hearing on the SEI Models. He announced that speakers were to fill out a request to speak form and that comments would be limited to 5 minutes for each speaker and that copies of the SEI Models were available to the public.

3. Call to the Public for Comments on the DRAFT Structured English Immersion Models based on the June 15, 2007 version.

Dr. R. D. Coapman of the Omega Alpha Academy in Sierra Vista asked how Charter Schools are to address the Highly Qualified requirement under No Child Left Behind when charter school

teachers are not required to be certified. Chairman Maguire stated that this was a certification issue and that he will follow-up on this question.

The next speaker was Mr. Steven D. Holmes of the Tucson Unified School District. His first concern was the issue of all English Language Learner (ELL) students being required to have four hours of English Language Development (ELD). He asked for clarification on what was meant by the first year (in HB 2064). He stated that his understanding was that the four hours pertained to Pre-Emergent and Emergent students only. He also stated that he was concerned about the appropriateness of four hours of ELD for the Intermediate proficiency level students. He also asked about the process for submitting alternative models for approval by the Task Force. He was concerned about the process and timeline for implementation.

Dr. Garcia asked Mr. Holmes how the SEI Models would impact his district.

Mr. Holmes responded that he had concerns about delaying graduation due to the time spent away from content area classes in the middle and high schools. He expressed concern that there would be socialization issues at the elementary level as these students would be separated from native speakers for an extended length of time.

Mr. Holmes further stated that if Reading First is allowed as a research based program of ELD in the model, then this will open up the possibility of using other research based reading programs as well. Margaret Garcia Dugan stated that in the Reading First Program, the reading skills are already aligned to the Proficiency Standards and the Discrete Skills Inventory. He stated that while the Models provide more opportunities to take the AZELLA in order to mainstream ELLs as quickly as possible, he has a concern that Harcourt is not returning scoring results back to the district in time. He said the logistics of this would be a problem. He said the assessment was not what it could be.

The next speaker was Harold A. Kirchner, of Yuma Union High School District #20. Mr. Kirchner stated that the Yuma High School District has been using the four-hour model for many years. It has been stated that not many schools in Arizona are using four hours of ELD, but it should be noted that Yuma High School District has been doing this successfully for years. He stated that ELL students receive 1 English credit and 3 elective credits for the 4 hours. He stated that it takes time to set up a four-hour program, but once it is set up, it works well. He stated that time needs to be spent working with the school counselor and the registrar on scheduling. He said that he had evidence of the success of his program and documentation is available.

He stated that AZELLA test results were “useless” as by the time they were getting the information back from Harcourt the students had already been placed.

Mr. Kirchner stated that in his district they are glad that they use the English Proficiency Standards.

Mr. Kirchner handed out copies of the SEI Course Description and Scope and Sequence of his program, the Yuma Union High School District Course Descriptions booklet for the year 2007-2008 and a flowchart of the FY 2007/08 ELL Flowchart (attached).

The next speaker was Sal Gabaldón of the Tucson Unified School District. He stated that he needed clarification on credits for high school students. Right now they are given two periods of English, one for English credit and one for elective credit. This makes it possible for High School ELL students to catch up in two years. He asked for a clarification of how students were going to earn their high school credits with the Models. He expressed a concern that the only way a student is admitted to the ELL program is with AZELLA.

Mr. Gabaldón stated his concern regarding Special Education students who are ELL. He said that funding for these students would be an issue. He was concerned that funding would only be received for the Special Education students if they were receiving ELD services. Furthermore, he stated that there would be no supplemental funding for ELLs in a gifted program. He was concerned that without the ability to test these students in Spanish, their gifted status would not be identified. He asked how a student who is not in an SEI classroom would be funded. In summary, his concern was that funding would be affected with the models and that exceptions for programmatic issues such as Special Education and Gifted needed to be addressed.

Mr. Gabaldón asked that the Task Force maintain only one test over time. He mentioned that there was the LAS, the SELP and now the AZELLA. He asked that data collected be shared with LEAs regarding how long it takes to reach proficiency.

Margaret Garcia Dugan responded that per proposition 203, special education programs for physically or mentally impaired students are completely unaffected.

The next speaker was Deborah Sexton of the Sierra Vista Public Schools. Her first question was how to submit their models. She asked if any schools are currently using the four-hour ELD model. The Chairman pointed out that in earlier testimony Harold Kirchner of Yuma Union High School District indicated that they had been since 1998. Ms. Sexton said she would like to talk to them regarding implementation at her school.

Ms. Sexton stated that she was concerned about the specific blocks of time dedicated to grammar, reading and writing. She also inquired about the grouping of ELLs only. She said the ELLs will miss core classes if they are in four hours of ELD. She stated these students will be one year behind and will actually be "penalized". She said their AIMS scores were bad enough now. She stated that students are going to be pulled out of a language rich environment. She inquired that if they only had three periods of ELD at one school could the 4th hour of ELD be a reading hour at their school. She asked who teaches the four hours of ELD.

Ms. Garcia Dugan stated that it would have to be someone with an SEI, ESL or Bi-lingual endorsement and is a highly qualified teacher with 24 hours in Language Arts or English. She

further stated that schools should use their best teacher, one who is energetic and has a positive attitude and wants to teach ELLs.

Ms. Sexton asked if she had a low number of ELLs could she place Pre-Emergents in the same classroom as Intermediates. Dr. Garcia answered "yes." Ms. Garcia Dugan said that once the models are implemented, students will achieve proficiency in the lower grades and should be entering middle school proficient and in the mainstream.

Ms. Sexton asked if the students are in ELD for four hours, what classes they should take for the other two hours of the school day. Ms. Garcia Dugan stated that math and Physical Education could possibly be the other two classes.

Ms. Sexton said that in the past the push was to put ELLs in the mainstream and now it appears there has been a 360 degree change. Dr. Garcia stated that much of what is in the models is directly from the law.

Ms. Sexton said her school has 55 minute periods and asked if this fulfills a 60 minute requirement for an area of ELD. Chairman Maguire said this is allowed in the model. She asked if they could use an itinerant teacher and Chairman Maguire said this allowable in the models.

The next speaker was Irene Close of the Sierra Vista. Her comments are attached (#2). She commented additionally that one model will not fit all. She said she was concerned about linguistic isolation and solitary confinement of the ELLs.

The next speaker was Craig Scofield of Indian Oasis Baboquivari Unified District. He said that due to financial difficulties they are on a four-day week and can't use school rooms for Compensatory Instruction. Also, he stated that they cannot use the rooms for SEI Training. He stated that it was difficult to find teachers for Sells, Arizona which is located 70 miles outside of Tucson and there is no money for teacher transportation. He indicated that they did not apply for Compensatory Instruction due to failure of the staff to submit the completed application. He asked if there was an extension to apply for Compensatory Instruction funds. He inquired about the DSI.

The next speaker was Susan Eissinger of Chandler Unified School District. She asked about the legality of transporting students as they have some schools in Chandler where they have very few ELL students. Mr. Maguire said he will get an answer.

Joan Molera, Principal of Desert Shadows Middle School in the Nogales Unified School District was the next to speak. She said that the SEI is working in Nogales. She indicated that they have an A/B block schedule of 95 minutes. She indicated that it is focused time for ELD. She said they have an after-school program as well. Students in the after-school program have a ratio of 1-6 and attend once per week. All students who don't pass AIMS are required to attend the after-school program. Their attendance is tracked and if a student is absent the principal makes a personal contact. She said the teachers don't mind the hard work if they get results. Ms. Molera

stated that the teachers are strong instructional leaders in front of these students. She stated that all staff members are asked to use English with the students including cafeteria workers and coaches, she noted.

Ms. Molera stated that the SEI Models validate what Nogales is already doing. She distributed materials to the Task Force; the Desert Shadows Middle School Course Description Booklet for 2007-2008, 6th grade and the 2007-08 DSMS teaching schedule for grades 6 – 8.

The next speaker was Audrey Reff of Flowing Wells school district. She asked for information on the DSI asking what they are and how will they be inserviced to teachers.

The final speaker was Kelt Cooper of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). He announced a special email address to which questions regarding the SEI Models could be addressed. The questions will be compiled and guidance in the form of Frequently Asked Questions will be produced and posted to the ADE website. The email address is ELDQuestions@azed.gov. He further stated that ADE is closely monitoring the work of the Task Force so that training will begin in this upcoming school year.

4. Discussion of upcoming Task Force Activities

Chairman Maguire stated that the next activities of the Task Force would be adoption of the models, creation and adoption of SEI budget forms and establishing a process for submitting alternative models to the Task Force. Dr. Baracy asked what the process would be after today's meeting. Chairman Maguire stated that the comments, along with any written correspondence submitted by August 8, 2007 will be compiled for the Task Force.

Chairman Maguire announced that the next Task Force public hearing/meeting is on August 2, 2007. As reflected in the revised agenda, the meeting room has been changed from Senate Hearing Room 1 to House Hearing Room 3.

5. Call to the Public

Mr. Alan Maguire made a call to the public at 3:05 p.m. for any items that were not included on the agenda. There were no speakers.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. with a motion from Margaret Garcia Dugan and a second by Eileen Klein.

Arizona ELL Task Force

Alan Maguire, Chairman
October 10, 2007